

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are pending in this application. Applicant is pleased to note the Examiner indicated that claims 2-5, 6/2-5, 8/2-5, 9/2-5, 11/2-5, and 13/2-5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant's representatives thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the personnel interview held on February 12, 2004. During the interview, Applicant's representatives explained the invention. For example, Applicant's representatives explained that by providing a placement stage with a foot-print covering only a portion of the exhaust port, a high exhaust rate can be achieved and the vacuum is increased.

Applicant's representative argued that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references Jang et al. and Masaru JP 11-243079. In particular, Applicant's representatives explained that in Masaru JP '079 the exhaust port(s) is located on the side of the placement stage and thus the placement stage does not cover any part of the exhaust port. The Examiner agreed that Masaru appears not to read on claim 1 but maintained that Jang et al. reads on claim 1.

Applicant's representatives proposed to amend claim 1 to recite "a foot-print of said placement stage covers less than a whole surface of said exhaust port." The Examiner seemed to agree that this limitation may overcome Jung et al. reference but indicated that a further consideration and/or search would be necessary.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 1, 9/1, 10, 11/1, 12, and 13/1 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jang et al. (US Patent No. 5,552,017).

Applicant has amended claim 1 to further recite "a foot-print of said placement stage covers less than a whole surface of said exhaust port." Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found throughout the initial disclosure. For Example, the Examiner is directed to Figure 4 and related description in the specification for support to the added limitation. The amendments to claim 1 obviate the above rejection. By providing a placement stage with a foot-print covering less than a whole surface of the exhaust port, a high exhaust rate is achieved and the ultimate vacuum is increased (see, for example, page 3 of the specification).

In contrast, Jang et al. merely discloses an exhaust port 24 (illustrated in Figures 2-4) which is totally covered by a foot-print of the substrate electrode 7, i.e. the placement stage of wafer 10. Therefore, Jang et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest “a foot-print of said placement stage covers less than a whole surface of said exhaust port,” as now recited in amended claim 1.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, and claims 9-13 which are directly dependent from claim 1, are patentable and respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 9/1, 10, 11/1, 12, and 13/1 under § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 6/1, 7, 9/1, 11/1, 12, and 13/1 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kamiyashiki Masaru (JP Patent 11-243079) (hereinafter JP ‘079).

JP ‘079 reference merely discloses a chamber having an exhaust port 11 which is located on a side of table 2, i.e. the placement stage (see Figures 1, 7 and 10 in JP ‘079). Consequently, the placement stage 2 of JP ‘079 does not cover any portion of the exhaust port 11. Therefore, JP ‘079 reference does not disclose, teach or suggest “a foot-print of said placement stage covers less than a whole surface of said exhaust port,” as recited in amended claim 1.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, and claims 6/1, 7, 9/1, 11/1, 12, and 13/1 which are directly dependent from claim 1, are patentable and respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 6/1, 7, 9/1, 11/1, 12, and 13/1 under § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jang et al. (US Patent No. 5,552,017).

Claim 8 is dependent from claim 1. Therefore, for at least the reasons provided above with regard to claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 8 is patentable. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 8 under § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the claims are now in form for allowance, and such action is hereby solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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